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ton levied on firewood taken from Reserved forests pressed hard on the people and requested that the tax might be abolished or at least reduced. He explained that the procedure laid down in the Forest Department in regard to the cutting and removal of firewood entailed much delay and expense to the people, that altogether they had to pay six rupees for every two rupees' worth of firewood and that the people had no option but to buy it at any price as there were no unreserved forests close to the villages from which fuel could be taken.

Dewan's reply.—It is proper that a fee should be levied on firewood taken from Reserved forests. The question of reducing the fee, however, will be considered.

3. *Separation of the Devaswom from the Revenue Department.*

Mr. A.D. Arumanayagom (Member, South Travancore Native Christian Association, Nagercoil) requested that the Devaswoms might be separated from the Revenue Department with a view to the more efficient administration of the two Departments and also to throw open the latter Department to all classes of His Highness' subjects.

Mr. S. Padmanabha Pillai (Member, Karunagapalli Taluk) supported the request and said that the Hindus too had a grievance in the matter. They were not satisfied with the management of the temples such as it was. Low-paid subordinates who had to deposit heavy cash securities managed the Devaswom affairs, and fraud and peculation were the result. The *padivu* or scale of expenditure for the several temples was fixed about 90 years ago and all along it had continued unchanged, although the prices of the several articles entered had steadily risen since then. In several of the temples, the *pujas* and other daily and monthly ceremonies were being perfunctorily performed. The Hindus had a grievance in things being thus mismanaged. It was they that had established many of the Devaswoms and endowed them with large properties and naturally they were anxious as to the future of the Devaswoms. The Government was but a trustee in respect of those institutions. In conclusion, he said that the people were thankful to the present Administration for bestowing so much attention on Devaswom affairs and for the steps already taken to remove the uncertainties and irregularities connected with purificatory ceremonies, and requested that Government might be further pleased to separate and thoroughly reform the Devaswom Department and place it on a satisfactory footing.

Dewan's reply.—The subject is engaging the attention of Government. The suggestions made are good and will be considered.

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